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INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3065
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 0941
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 5216

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CHENNAI 000134

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ETTC KOMC IN

SUBJECT: BLUE LANTERN LEVEL 3: POST-LICENSE PRE-SHIPMENT CHECK ON
LICENSE 05-050028972

REF: A) STATE 19666 B) JOUBERT-LIN/WOODARD E-MAILS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Post does not recommend approval of this license.

Both the foreign consignee and end-user have been difficult or impossible to contact, and much of the contact information on the license check request is erroneous. The end-user has also been evasive and non-cooperative. We have little confidence that either the foreign consignee or the end-user is capable of safeguarding the item in question or of preventing the item from being transferred to a third party.

End-user evasive and non-cooperative

¶2. (SBU) We contacted the end-user (Vijay Babu) by telephone on March 14, who told us that he has had the item for approximately two months. (This contrasts with ref B, which indicates that the item has not been shipped.) Babu expressed some discomfort when we asked to meet with him at his place of business so that we could meet him and see the equipment, even though we assured him this was a standard procedure for certain equipment on the US Munitions List (USML), a term he did not recognize. After receiving ref B, we called Babu again to verify the shipment's status, and he again confirmed his possession of the item. He appeared more helpful during this telephone conversation, but said that he needed "a couple of days for personal matters" before he would be able to meet and show us the equipment.

Curious location

¶3. (SBU) We sent a driver to locate the Neera Technical Services address (Plot 18-2-20, Rasool Pura, Begumpet, Secunderabad) listed in ref A. After searching the neighborhood, the driver determined that the address does not exist. The person who answered the company's landline number (+91 40-65691144) stated "they" (presumably a reference to the company) were not in the city, but provided a cell phone number (+91 99-8564-7256) to contact. The man who answered that number declined to provide the address of the company, but agreed to meet at a nearby location.

¶4. (SBU) We then met that man, who identified himself as Ahmed Basha. (Upon learning that the Consulate was involved, Basha showed a police ID card and claimed to be a police officer.) He agreed to take us to Neera's office. We accompanied him to his residence (1-18-20 Gun Bazar, Rasool Pura, Begumpet, Secunderabad), where he showed us a locked door on the third level of his building. Basha said that Vijay Babu rents the apartment and runs Neera Technical Services from there. We were not able to see the inside of the apartment but Basha stated that the office contains a computer, fax machine, telephone and desk. We asked Basha if he knew of any other equipment located in the office; he replied that he did not know of any other equipment. Basha stated that Babu was out of town and would return sometime the following week.

15. (SBU) We spoke with Babu again on March 26. He told us he would call us later that day to set up an appointment for an assistant to show us the equipment in question, but he never called back. Since then, we have had no success in contacting Babu, despite repeated attempts. The first contact number, +91 40-65691144, is "switched off" according to the voice recording. The other number for Babu listed in ref A, a mobile number, (+91-9391173337), fails to connect to anything other than a standard voice recording for an inoperable number: "please check the number you have dialed."

Misleading information

16. (SBU) We asked the local telephone company to provide the address for the primary telephone number for Neera (+91 40-65691144). The telephone company told us that the address for that number is 7-340/1, Maruthi Nagar Vaishali Nagar - Post, Hyderabad. This address corresponds to the Foreign Consignee's address in ref A, not the address listed for Neera.

Unable to contact foreign consignee

17. (SBU) We were unable to contact the foreign consignee using the contact information in ref A. The mobile phone is switched off. The two landline numbers are currently not in use. Dialing the fax number results simply in a busy signal. With an Internet search, we found two businesses named "Sameer Electronics" in Hyderabad. We spoke with both, who claimed to deal only in consumer electronics components and finished goods, not the type of equipment that shows up on the USML.

Recommendation: no license

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18. (SBU) Given the difficulty of contacting both the end-user and foreign consignee and the end-user's unwillingness to cooperate fully, we recommend that this license be either denied or revoked, as appropriate. We also recommend that both the foreign consignee and end-user be prohibited from purchasing or transferring USML items until we can establish their bona fides.

19. This message was coordinated with Embassy New Delhi and the RSO posted in Hyderabad to prepare for the opening of a consulate there.

HOPPER